DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 661 UD 021 274

AUTHOR Gittell, Marilyn; And Others
TITLE Citizen Organizations: Citizen Participation in Educational Decisionmaking. Executive Summary.
INSTITUTION Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE May 80
CONTRACT 400-76-0115
NOTE 20p.; For related documents see ED 181 089-090.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Involvement; *Community Organizations; *Decision Making; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Minority Groups; Organizational Communication; *Organizational Effectiveness; *Parent Participation; Political Influences; Urban Areas
IDENTIFIERS California (Los Angeles); Georgia (Atlanta); Massachusetts (Boston)

ABSTRACT

In order to examine the role and effectiveness of community organizations in increasing parental and community involvement in educational decision making, a research project was initiated which included three elements: (1) case studies documenting the behavior of organizations and internal and external factors that influence their functioning, (2) a comparative analysis of organizational characteristics related to effectiveness, and (3) an examination of the degree to which networking contributes to the ability of organizations to increase citizen's access to information. Special attention was paid to the participation of minority communities. The three cities in which the research took place were Los Angeles, California; Atlanta, Georgia; and Boston, Massachusetts. This report summarizes the research design, methodology, findings, and implications. (MK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED200661

CITIZEN ORGANIZATIONS: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL DECISIONMAKING

Executive Summary

Marilyn Gittell
with Bruce Hoffacker,
Eleanor Rollins and
Samuel Foster

May 1980

Prepared as part of *Citizen Organizations: A Study of Citizen Participation in Educational Decisionmaking* by the Institute for Responsive Education through a subcontract with the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. The work upon which this publication is based was performed pursuant to Contract Number 400-76-0115 with the Program on Educational Organizations and Local Communities of the National Institute of Education, and does not necessarily reflect the views of that agency.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

UD021274

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY	1
	Site Selection	1
	Organizational Selection	1
	Research Design	2
	Independent Variables	4
	Dependent Variables	4
	Research Procedures	5
	The Use of Participant Observation	5
	Organizational Data Sources	5
	Data Sources for Local School Systems	6
	Additional Research Procedures	6
II.	RESEARCH FINDINGS	6
	The Organizations	6
	Internal Organization Characteristics	7
	External Organization Characteristics	8
	The Effectiveness of Organizational Networks	9
	Organizations and Policy	9
	The Politics of School Systems	10
	Political Culture	11
III.	CONCLUSIONS	12
IV.	SUMMARY OF MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS	14
	The Organizations	14
	The School Systems	15
	The Cities	15

FEB 2 3 1981

Background and Methodology

In 1976, the National Institute of Education (NIE) issued an RFP calling for an examination of the role and effectiveness of community organizations in increasing the ability of parents and other community members, especially urban minorities and the poor, to involve themselves in educational policy decisions. The research was to include three elements:

(1) Case studies documenting the behavior of organizations, including examples of techniques, strategies, and procedures that might help school staffs and community people reach their objectives; and an examination of both the internal structural factors and the external political and social factors influencing organizations.

(2) Comparative analysis of characteristics of organizations related to to effectiveness, and the importance of environmental variables.

(3) An examination of the degree to which networking could contribute to organizational effectiveness by increasing access of citizen-initiated organizations to useful information about school policies and practices and strengthening the capacity of these organizations to use information.

Site Selection

Special attention was paid to the participation of minority communities. Cities chosen for the project were required to have a population of at least 500,000 and a school-age population of which at least 40 percent of all students were minority students. Twenty cities met these requirements when the research began. After a national survey of community organizations which lasted a year, 12 cities were selected for site visits. During these visits, approximately 350 interviews were conducted with respondents who were concerned with educational issues. The interview results provided the basis for selection of the three cities to be studied, the 16 organizations to be included, and the refinement of the research design.

The selection process recognized the importance of regional politics (established by other researchers) and included three distinct regions. The cities selected were Atlanta (comparatively advanced development of black electoral politics), Boston (importance of court-ordered desegregation; economic status), and Los Angeles (ethnic diversity; State role in district schools; populist tradition). The site selection was designed so each city would have distinctive characteristics from which generalizations could be made about other cities with similar attributes.

Organizational Selection

The survey of community organizations and review of literature led us to develop a selection design used to ensure replication of the types of organizations across the three sites. The design required that in each city at least the following elements would be included:

- o one citywide organization
- o one multipurpose organization
- o one mandated organization
- o one middle-class organization
- o two low-income, neighborhood organizations

A single organization could be used to cover many categories. The following table summarizes the characteristics of the organizations. Pseudonyms have been used to ensure the anonymity of the organizations.

Using the quota sample design and the results of the national survey, decisions were made on which organizations would be asked to participate in the research. The amount of group activity was the main decisionmaking criterion. After a review by local site coordinators of preliminary selections, several additional selections were made. Formal agreements were made with the leadership of each participating organization. Two of those originally selected were replaced after they declined to participate. The final group of 16 included 6 in Atlanta, 5 in Boston, and 5 in Los Angeles.

Research Design

Two points should be made about the research design submitted to perform the study. First, it assumed that parent and community participation were desirable and indeed necessary for the development of responsive educational programs. The study would not determine the value of participation; the research was designed instead to focus on the ways in which different community organizations provide channels for participation. Second, the research design focused on the role and behavior of community organizations rather than on individual citizen participation. Therefore, participation was viewed as only one variable influencing organizational activities. We assumed that community organizations were an instrument for reflecting community interests and that there are different interests in society. Lower-income community organizations are necessarily concerned with gaining access and power and resource reallocation.

Our review of the literature on participation and community organizations led to the following hypotheses, which served as the basis for the research design development:

1. that poor and working-class people are comparatively powerless;
2. that powerless groups receive fewer benefits, including educational benefits, especially in times of scarcity;
3. that to gain benefits and opportunity, people must gain power; and
4. that to gain power, poor and working-class groups, lacking other resources, must depend on numbers.

The final research design called for systematic analysis in each city and for each organization of the variables listed.

SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Organization	(1) City	(2) Economic Class	(3) Strategy	(4) Geographic Scope	(5) Issue Orientation	(6) Racial/ Ethnic Group	(7) Leadership	(8) Membership	Date of Inception
Braves	A	L	S & a	C	M	B	S–C	C	1967
Peachtrees		U	a	N	S	O	R	V	1976
Falcons		L	A	N	M	B	I	R	1975
Omnis		U	a	C	S	B	C	V	1977
Grits		L	S	C	M	O	S	C	1971
Magnolias		L	S & a	N	M	B	C	C	1953
Patriots	B	L	S & a	C	M	H	S	C	1971
Yankees		U	S	C	S	O	S	V–C	1972
Commons		L	A & a	N	M	B	I	R	1967
Celtics		L	S	N	M	B	S	C	1968
Fenways		L	A	N	S	B & H	I	R	1974
Dodgers	LA	L	A	N	S	B & H	I	R	1962
Margaritas		L	A & a	C	S	H	I & S	R	1968
Sunsets		L	S	N	S	H	S	C	1970
Lakers		L	S & a	N	M	B	S	R	1956
Venturas		U	a	C	M	O	R	V	1963

Explanation:

Column	Abbreviations
(1)	A – Atlanta; B – Boston; LA – Los Angeles
(2)	U – Middle–to–upper income; L – lower income
(3)	S – Service; a – advocacy; A – advisory
(4)	C – Citywide; N – neighborhood
(5)	M – Multipurpose; S – school-issue only
(6)	B – Black; O – other; H – Hispanic
(7)	S – Staff; C – constant; R – rotating; I – externally imposed
(8)	C – Client; V – voluntary; R – representational

Independent Variables

Environmental Variables:

- o structure of the city and the schools,
- o socioeconomic characteristics of the city,
- o a historical perspective on participation in the city, and
- o the existence of alternate participatory structures

Organizational Characteristics:

- o structural characteristics,
- o participation and membership characteristics, and
- o representativeness and leadership

Dependent Variables

Effectiveness of Organizations:

- o achievement of goals,
- o impact on school policy — budget, personnel, and curriculum,
- o impact on participants and constituents,
- o impact on the community,
- o access to information and expertise,
- o communication and contact with decisionmakers,
- o relationships with other organizations,
- o ability to develop and use networks.

While the research conducted resulted in increased emphasis on some variables and/or decreased emphasis on others, this initial formulation was retained as the basic research plan.

Our original discussion of organizational effectiveness recognized that effectiveness could be evaluated on several scales, including organizational longevity and size. However, our research was directed at identifying those factors which increased the ability of organizations to influence the decisionmaking process. Moreover, we were especially concerned with issues which reflected major education policy concerns (e.g., teacher evaluation) as opposed to issues related to individual students (e.g., suspensions). Therefore, we decided to have the primary criterion for evaluating organizational effectiveness be an organization's ability to influence decisions in major policy areas. Originally, policy was defined as those issues which dealt with budget, curriculum, and personnel.

As the research progressed, we recognized that this approach might exclude issues of importance to the organizations in each city but which did not fall into one of those three areas. As we intended to provide the broadest possible opportunity to demonstrate organizational involvement, we decided to add to the policy areas the major issues in each city, as identified by the site research teams. In consultation with the organizational leadership, the research teams identified the following issues:

Atlanta:	o	educational outcomes
	o	declining enrollment
	o	desegregation
Boston:	o	school safety
	o	selection of school superintendent
	o	desegregation
Los Angeles:	o	Proposition 13
	o	collective bargaining (Rodda Act)
	o	desegregation

Since each site research team identified desegregation as a major issue, we included a special case study of the desegregation process in each city.

Research Procedures

To conduct a comparative analysis of the 16 organizations, it was necessary to develop a standardized data-collection strategy. This strategy also required inclusion of a range of approaches so that a full picture of the organizations' activities could be gained and the cross-checking of information to verify the perceptions of individuals both inside and outside the organizations could be undertaken.

The Use of Participant Observation

In order to conduct in-depth research on the organizations, we needed complete access to members and to organizational meetings. The most satisfactory means of ensuring this access was to use members of each organizations as community researchers. This use of participant community researchers rather than outside research teams increased the level of trust between researcher and organization member.

The decision to use such community researchers was also based on the fact that it would lead to freer implementation of the various research procedures such as questionnaires and interviews. Additionally, as organization members, participant observers had the extensive knowledge of the internal functioning of their respective organizations necessary to develop a full picture of each organization's behavior.

Organizational Data Sources

Four major approaches were used in gathering data on the activities of the organizations. The first source was a regular review of organizational meetings. Using a report form developed by the central research staff, each community researcher reported on organizational issues and on the nature and extent of participation by the membership at each meeting.

Secondly, community researchers also conducted a series of organizational leader interviews. Using an open-ended interview schedule, interviews were conducted with up to three leaders in each organization. The same schedule was used three times during the course of the research to allow us to map changes in each organization's issue agenda and activities.

Third, organization leaders and members filled out two sets of questionnaires. These, developed after a review of similar instruments used in other studies, were designed to generate information on the internal functioning of the organization, the perceptions of the school system, and the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Finally, a review of organizational documents such as charters, policy statements, and previous minutes was undertaken to provide a clear picture of the reasons for the formation of each organization, its goals and strategies, and its primary issue involvements.

Data Sources for Local School Systems

Two major sources provided the necessary information on the operation of the three city school systems. First, regular observation of school board meetings was made, using a standard reporting format. The report included items such as issues dealt with and organizational attendance and participation. A series of open-ended decisionmaker interviews was also used. This series, conducted three times over the course of the research, included a number of respondents who were either school board members or central office personnel.

Additional Research Procedures

To add to our understanding of local environments the community researchers used approaches other than these two targeted sets of research procedures. Regular reports were prepared on the media coverage of major school issues and on the activities of community organizations. Additionally, the site coordinators (senior researchers responsible for the conduct of the research in each site) maintained journals which included their perceptions on major issues, the functioning of the school system, and the behavior of the community organizations.

II. Research Findings

The results of the preceding research procedures were used to develop a series of profiles of the organizations, the school systems, and the cities. These individual profiles (presented in a series of Appendixes to the Final Research Report) served as the basis for the comparative analysis.

The Organizations

The research findings highlighted the central role Federal policy played in shaping organizational structure and behavior. Two major policy thrusts were visible: the mandating of parental involvement and the funding of community organizations to engage in service delivery.

While mandated organizations have existed for many years (one in this study dates from 1962), the emphasis on this form of involvement increased significantly in the late 1960's and the 1970's. The primary push for such mandated involvement has come through special Federal and State categorical programs although local school districts also may mandate parental involvement. As part of their efforts to effect desegregation, the courts have also begun to establish formal structures for mandated

involvement. Although the NIE required us to exclude Federally mandated structures from our original study design, our national survey indicated that inclusion of a least one nonschool or State or local mandated group in each city was essential to a full understanding of the relative effectiveness or ineffectiveness of citizen-initiated organizations.

Another development influencing the character of community organizations is the funding of these organizations to provide client services. The availability of funding has encouraged organizations to seek it. Once an organization has secured funding, its structure and activities become oriented to the requirements of the funding agencies.

Through the use of local reputational analysis we attempted to identify active advocacy organizations involved in school issues during the selection process. Our intention was to concentrate the research on advocacy groups. The selection process, however, produced no school-issue-oriented, self-initiated, lower-income organization in any of the three cities. Rather, we were referred to mandated or service-delivery organizations as the most "active" organizations in minority communities. Within our sample were two organizations which had moved from advocacy into service delivery and one case in which advocacy activities had resulted in the establishment of a mandated organization. In a later census of all community organizations in each city we confirmed the lack of self-initiated, advocacy, school-issue-oriented community organizations. Our conclusion, therefore, is that mandated and service-delivery organizations are currently the dominant forms in lower-income and minority communities.

In addition to this finding of the absence of lower-income advocacy organizations, the research concluded that the most important variables in examining organizational effectiveness were the issues of economic class or organizational strategy. Within the sample of organizations studied in this research, we found it impossible to separate the impact of class and strategy: three middle-income organizations generally pursued an advocacy strategy; no lower-income organization pursued a primarily advocacy strategy.

Consequently, the effects of these two variables cannot be completely separated. The issue of dependence and the questions of economic class and strategy proved to be significant predictors of both internal organizational characteristics and external organizational behavior. In both categories—mandated involvement and funded service delivery—the result is the establishment of organizational dependency. Advocacy strategies require a level of independence which is not readily compatible with these forms of external dependence.

Internal Organization Characteristics

The most important internal components of an organizations are the nature of its membership and leadership. In these two critical categories, significant differences were found among organizations when they were examined in terms of economic class and strategy.

An analysis of the organizations showed three predominant models of membership and leadership. First, there are organizations which have rotating leadership and voluntary membership. The members of these organizations join because of an interest in the activities; the leadership structure is one in which the key positions are regularly

rotated among different members. These organizations generally have no paid staff. In our study, they were the middle-income, advocacy organizations.

Second, there are organizations in which membership can be considered representational in the sense that the membership characteristics are largely determined by the institution mandating the organization. Individuals serve in these organizations generally as a result of elections and their function is to represent the larger population the mandating agency wishes to involve. The leadership pattern of these organizations can be described as externally-imposed in that the structure is established as part of the mandate and often the leaders are appointed. The major role of these mandated organizations is advocacy.

Third, the membership may be viewed as the organization's clients. In instances where the organization's goal is to provide a service, the persons receiving the services are viewed as members, although they may play no role in the functioning of the organization and have no voice in the determination of what service they receive. The leadership of these organizations is generally professional and paid. While the organizations may have unpaid boards of directors, the necessity of a full-time paid staff to run the programs, provide regular reports to the funding agencies, and secure new grants results in control of the organization by the staff. The major role of these organizations is service delivery.

Of the 16 organizations in this study, 11 reflected one of these three leadership, membership, and orientation models. (The others were mixed.) Most significant was the fact that the advisory and service-oriented organizations that were predominant among low-income organizations also reflected external dependence. The mandated organizations were dependent on the creating institution for their existence and creditability. The service organizations relied on external funding and that funding determined both their leadership and membership patterns. The middle-class organizations, on the other hand, were not externally dependent.

External Organization Characteristics

In terms of the manner in which organizations interact with other organizations and with decisionmakers, the most visible manifestations of the external dependency of the lower-income organizations are in the strategies they adopt and their inability to network. Both factors are instrumental in reducing effectiveness. Dependent organizations adopt advisory or service strategies, eschewing advocacy, and have limited networks and poor access to the school system and decisions.

The analysis of both these internal and external characteristics points out the importance of external dependency. The mandated and service-delivery organizations have less active memberships; in fact the membership may play no active role in the organization at all. The leadership, which is shaped by external forces, becomes increasingly removed from the group it is supposed to represent. The development of local leadership, the mobilization of a broad-based membership, and the pursuit of internally democratic procedures are not priorities for service-delivery or advisory organizations.

The impact of external dependency can be seen in the extent to which the organizations pursue policy issues. The advocacy organizations showed a greater tendency to discuss and adopt positions on policy questions, although generally they supported

existing policies, seeking to increase resources and services for the schools in the community. Service-delivery organizations were generally limited in focus to those areas in which they received funding or anticipated support. In only a few cases were we able to identify instances of such organizations adopting policy positions independent of their funding sources. Finally, the mandated organizations, with one notable exception, were limited to the areas of activity and roles defined for them. The one exception was a mandated organization which was not limited to a single issue but was free to adopt positions on issues of concern to the community.

The Effectiveness of Organizational Networks

As noted, the NIE was interested in the effectiveness of organizational networks. As part of the data-gathering procedures, we asked questions to determine how organizations received information; with what other organizations they worked; and with which decisionmakers they were in contact. While the information we gathered only partly indicates an organization's ability to create networks, some conclusions are warranted.

Service-delivery organizations create networks with other service organizations and funding agencies, but do not develop contacts with advocacy or advisory groups. Mandated organizations limit themselves to creating networks with the institutions which mandated them and with other organizations in the same structure. Advocacy organizations tend to have more extensive network patterns, including contact with representatives of the media and with universities. The other two types of organization do not develop these contacts.

These network patterns also suggest limited contacts with political and economic decisionmakers. The networks of service-delivery and mandated organizations are with program administrators rather than with political decisionmakers. Contacts with business groups on educational issues are generally limited to business support of vocational education programs. The research also indicated a dearth of contacts with political decisionmakers above the city level. While some contacts were identified between multi-purpose organizations and State-level decisionmakers, these contacts were generally not directed towards educational policy concerns. This lack of contact beyond the city level extends to intraorganizational networks, with few organizations indicating contacts with other organizations at the county, state, or national level.

Organizational networks for these groups are not as significant as personal networks. The questionnaire results indicated that the leaders' networks are substantially more developed than the members' networks. There are no indications that organization leaders seek members' networks. There is, in fact, an acceptance of the primary role of organization leaders and the importance of their maintaining access with decisionmakers.

Organizations and Policy

Research findings regarding the ability of organizations to involve themselves in the policymaking process are discouraging. In analyzing organization activities in the broad policy areas of budget, personnel, and curriculum—as well as the areas identified as important in each of the three cities—we found a lack of involvement or concern with these issues. Though interview respondents selectively viewed their organizations as "actively involved" in education issues, the evidence did not confirm these perceptions. Organization leaders rarely directed activity to the policy areas decisionmakers had identifed as major policy issues.

One important finding was the extent to which media reporting influenced the organizations' issue agendas. Our review of the media concluded that with the exception of desegregation, policy issues (i.e., budget, curriculum, and personnel) were not discussed and education reporting largely focused on individual or narrow school issues. To some extent organization agendas reflect the lack of media coverage of larger policy issues.

Not only did the organizations consistently ignore larger policy issues, they only infrequently reviewed their own goals. In only one case did an organization review its stated goals during the course of this study. The mandated organizations have their goals established by the mandating institution and raise no questions about them. The availability of funds determined service-delivery organizations' goals; observations indicated that organizational goals were only raised as an issue when funding was threatened and an organization had to identify a new source of support. All organizations spent significant amounts of time on maintenance issues. Even mandated organizations, designed so that maintenance is not a major concern, are constantly involved with this activity. In fact, more than half the working time of the majority of the 16 organizations is spent on maintenance issues.

The Politics of School Systems

In order to describe the role of organizations in influencing the policy development process, we studied the school systems in terms of their receptiveness to organizational input. Our approach was to focus on those elements which would encourage or discourage access to the policy process. We defined five elements as central to this analysis: level of decentralization, availability of school decisionmakers, representativeness of school decisionmakers, information flow, and operating style.

The research findings in these five areas showed marked similarity in the behavior of the three school systems. There were differences among the cities in style but not in the openness or access accorded organizations. In all three cities, administrative decentralization exists with no devolution of power to nonprofessionals. Lower-income neighborhood organizations are, therefore, at a disadvantage because decisions continue to be made by professionals and largely at the central district level.

The comparative analysis of the three school systems showed no significant differences in terms of the availability of decisionmakers or organization representatives. Board members were generally more available than bureaucrats, although even those contacts were limited. The most important finding in this regard was the decisionmakers' perceptions of who represented the community on educational issues. Decisionmakers consistently identified mandated organizations as the community organizations they were in contact with. This perception that the mandated structures represent the parents and community reduces the access of self-initiated organizations.

One of the research hypotheses we pursued was that the greater the compatibility of the bureaucratic leadership with the individuals they serve, the greater the responsiveness and sensitivity to community demands for involvement in decisionmaking. Our research found that despite increases in minority representation in elected and appointive positions, responsiveness to community organizations did not appreciably increase.

Economic class is more a conditioning factor in determining interaction between organizations and the school system than is racial compatibility. This was particularly evident in Atlanta where blacks have made significant gains in the bureaucracy, board membership, and staff.

Initiatives designed to increase the knowledge and awareness of parents have focused on increasing information exchange between the school bureaucracy and organizations. One of the central reasons for the establishment of mandated organizations was to ensure that access to information existed through a formal structure. Our research found that the school bureaucracies continue to restrict the dissemination of information. From the perspective of the organizations, official channels are either slow or unresponsive; when information is forthcoming, it is overwhelming in scope and the needed analysis requires a high level of technical expertise. Most organizations relied on individual contacts or other organizations for information rather than on the established dissemination channels. Only mandated organizations regularly relied on formal professional channels of information.

Despite similarities in the structural aspects of the three school systems, they demonstrated significantly different styles of operation. "Operating Style" refers primarily to the interaction of the school board, the superintendent, and the professional staff; we assumed it could contribute to the relative openness of the school system. In Atlanta, traditional patterns of control by the business and political elite and a distaste for organized community participation have resulted in a paternalistic operating style. In Boston, a heavily politicized environment has contributed to an authoritative style in which the board consistently attempts to dominate the superintendent. In Los Angeles, a long populist tradition has led to multiple arrangements for citizen involvement; a style we described as consultative. While these three operating styles reflect differences in city political systems they have not influenced the level of community organization involvement in descisionmaking.

The general conclusion drawn from the analysis of these five factors is that school systems regardless of operating style, continue to support professional controls and insullate themselves from citizen access to policymaking.

Political Culture

Our original concept of the independent variables in the research design stressed the importance of political culture in analyzing community organizations. Many researchers have concluded that the political and social environment of a city shapes its school politics. We assumed that a similar relationship would exist between political culture and community organizations.

Our research findings did not support this hypothesis. The primary and secondary research conducted in the three cities confirmed the strong tie between political culture and school politics. In all three cases, the operating style of the school system was directly related to the regional historical, political, and economic environment of its city. While the cities differed somewhat in terms of style, those differences in no way determined the access of community organizations to policy decisions and their effectiveness.

In analyzing the activities of community organizations, the external factors of economic class and the impact of Federal policy were more significant influences on behavior than city political culture. We have noted the influence of economic class on the internal and external characteristics of organizations and their strategies. The shift from advocacy to service-delivery and mandated groups is a direct outgrowth of Federal and State policies.

The common characteristics of the political economics of all three cities were the maintenance of a minority underclass population and the inequitable distribution of resources. These were instrumental in guaranteeing the lower-income citizen organizations would not be influential in any of the three cities. Minor differences among the cities such as the representation of blacks in the political elite in Atlanta or the diversity of the population in Los Angeles have no impact on these lower-income organizations.

In order to further test our findings on the role and behavior of the organizations and their relations to the school system, we examined the history and political circumstances related to the issue of desegregation in each city. While the issue was addressed at different times in the three cities, it allows for a comparative analysis between the sites. This case study confirmed our research findings on the political culture of the three cities and the limited effect of this culture on the role and effectiveness of community organizations.

In Atlanta, the resolution of the desegregation court case rested with traditional actors within a tightly closed political system, with the business community, and with established community representatives. In Boston, the heavily politicized school board continued to resist any desegregation efforts. Finally, the court was forced to take control of the entire school system. In Los Angeles, competing interests were encouraged to involve themselves in the development of the desegregation plan reflecting the consultative style of operation although none of the solicited plans was ultimately accepted.

In all three cases, participation by community organizations was limited to middle-class white organizations. In all three cities the bureacracies were resistant to change, and intervention by an external actor—the court—was necessary to ensure the development of a desegregation plan.

III. Conclusions

The nature of citizen participation in school affairs has changed during the decade of the 1970's. Federal, State, and local policies in recent years have mandated school organizations and provided funding to community organizations for the delivery of supplementary educational services. These policies have resulted in a change in focus for most organizations and have effectively diffused the energies of independently based and self-initiated citizen organizations which remain. Lower-income organizations especially have been shaped by these governmental policies. In these communities advocacy groups have been replaced by service-delivery organizations and mandated advisory bodies. As a result, the agendas of lower-income organizations have become largely defined by school professionals.

The issue of external dependence is most evident in the shift in thrust of community organizations, particularly in lower-income communities, from advocacy to service. We had anticipated that our research would focus on the types of advocacy groups which were so important during the 1960's and which often found themselves in conflict with the school system. We found, however, a dearth of those organizations and an increase in the number of mandated and service-delivery organizations. In fact, some of the service-delivery organizations which had begun as advocacy-oriented had shifted their emphasis to ensure continued existence. They had adopted a service role in response to Federal and state policies which provided direct funding to organizations engaged in service delivery.

The external dependency of community organizations has also been increased by government policies mandating parental and community involvement. These organizations become dependent for continued funding and direction on the agencies that create them. The wide range of categorical and general-purpose mandated organizations also saps the energy of local leaders, limiting their role in self-initiated organizations. The self-initiated lower-income organizations have less access to information and school professionals.

Mandated organizations can be characterized by the limitations of their formal relationship to the school system. The creators of mandated groups control the scope and activities of the organizations; the school system often determines the system of representation for members and selects the organizational leadership. The organizations show little ability or inclination to expand their contacts to include broader populations or self-initiated organizations. Those who create these organizations perceive them to represent community input and involvement, and to reduce the pressure on decisionmakers to maintain contact with a spectrum of community groups.

Our research confirms that community organizations are class-bound, and that class differences are reflected in their behavior and in the power they can exercise. The class base of organizations is significant because it is directly related to dependency. Middle-income organizations have sufficient resources to allow them to function independent of outside funding; they are free to pursue any and all policy issues. Lower-income self-initiated advocacy organizations are necessarily dependent on outside resources to maintain themselves. The more structure they seek, the greater their external dependence.

The importance of external funding to lower-income service delivery organizations and the creation of mandated structures serve to strengthen the ties between the system and the organizations. These ties directly preclude the independence necessary for lower-income organizations if they are to be free to pursue a reallocation of resources or a redistribution of power in the system.

The demise of an organizations does not have to be viewed as a failure. An organization's success or failure should, in fact, be measured by its effects achieved while its work is ongoing. For lower-income, powerless people, numbers are the primary resource; the projection of group interests and demands on the system and the degree of change brought about thereby will determine effectiveness. In judging such community organizations, their ability to rally support around issues, to enhance collective strength, and ultimately to influence the distribution of benefits and resources are important measures.

The political culture of the cities and the operating styles of the school system do not support or encourage effective citizen participation in major school policy issues. Citizen access to the decisionmaking process is generally limited; it is especially closed to those who actively seek a redistribution of resources throughout the system. In lower-income communities, mandated or service-delivery organizations have more direct access to the system, but exert little influence on school policy and are limited to a narrow range of issues. Most citizen organizations are not involved with policy issues at a level that has system-wide impact.

The results of the study strongly suggest that the prospects for effective citizen participation in educational decisionmaking are not very promising, especially for the lower-income population. Current policies do not support the development of independent lower-income organizations. In order for such organizations to exist, external dependency must be reduced and the organizations must be oriented toward an advocacy strategy. Major changes should take place in the politics and structure of school systems to make them more accessible to these organizations. Community organizations can be effective only in an environment which gives them greater access to power.

IV. Summary of Major Research Findings:

The Organizations

- Economic class is the key element in determining organizational strategy.
- Lower-income organizations have switched from an advocacy strategy to service delivery, which has increased their dependence on external sources.
- The strategy an organization pursues affects the internal structure of the organization in terms of membership and leadership.
- Class is more significant than race as a predictor of organizational structure.
- The middle-income organizational leadership pattern contains the greatest potential for training organization members.
- The leadership forms which predominate in lower-income organizations hold little potential for leadership training.
- The middle-income organizational membership model results in the highest levels of membership participation.
- The lower-income membership models do not directly involve members in organizational decisionmaking.
- All organizations participating in the study place little emphasis on internal democracy; organizations which pursue advocacy strategies provide the greatest potential for the development of internally-democratic procedures.
- Advocacy organizations tend to have the most highly developed network patterns.
- Service organizations tend to limit their networks to other service organizations and funding sources.
- Mandated organizations limit their contacts to the mandating institution and other mandated groups.

- Leaders' networks are substantially more developed than members' networks.
- Organizations show little regular involvement with broad school policy issues.
- All organizations showed strong concern for maintenance, spending large blocs of time on matters related to it.
- The organizations do not regularly evaluate and discuss organizational goals.
- The focus of reports in the media significantly affects the organizations' issue agendas.

The School Systems

- All three school systems are administratively decentralized; the absence of meaningful political decentralization limits the access of the organizations to the school system.
- The extent to which the school system personnel are representative of the general population does not affect the ability of organizations to gain access to the school system.
- Organizations do not rely on the school system for informaion.
- Despite differences in operating style, there were no differences in the level of organizational effectiveness in the three school systems. School systems and school professionals continued to exclude nonprofessional participants from the policy process.
- In all three cities, the school bureaucracy resisted the development and implementation of desegregation plans.
- Middle-to-upper income organizations were able to play a more active role in the development and implementation of desegregation plans than lower-income organizations, which were generally inactive or ineffective.
- Outside actors such as the Federal courts and Federal and State agencies were forced to become participants in school system governance in order to ensure desegregation of schools.

The Cities

- Despite differences in economic structure, all three cities maintain a narrow center of political power and an economic underclass.

- Electoral politics has not increased the access of organizations to the school system nor has it enhanced their effectiveness.

- Federal policy and economic class are more important influences on organizational strategy than a city's political culture.